Text of Kennedy's Peace Initiative, Pps. 3-4

If Russia Survived A Backdown Over Cuba, We Can Survive A Backdown in Vietnam

"I do not think that this dispute here is worthy of an escalation that would result in a confrontation with China in a world war. I do not believe there is much evidence that this is the kind of a test that if we should make a compromise, that then all the world will collapse because we have been defeated. This country is much too strong in my opinion that it would suffer any great setback. We are much stronger than Russia was when she withdrew from Cuba. Within a week people said she had had a rebuff and within a month everyone was complimenting them for having contributed to the maintenance of peace."

—Fulbright to Rusk: Foreign Relations hearing Feb. 18.

I. F. Stone's Weekly

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Kennedy's Quiet Realism vs. LBJ's Stale Myths

So far the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has done a disappointing job. To study the record of the Vietnam hearings is to see how poorly informed its members are. They gave expression to the growing disquiet about the war. But they failed to meet the central issues. Secretary Rusk was allowed without effective challenge to repeat the stale myth that this is primarily a foreign invasion, the Viet Cong the mere tools of a foreign invader. This mythology blocks the road to peace. A vast literature has grown up about the Vietnamese war since we took over control from the French 12 years ago; most of the writers, American or foreign, see the roots of the war in an indigenous rebellion and a divided country. But these Senators seem to have read little of it. The most striking evidence of their failure to do their homework was the almost total absence of questions about the central issue of the conflict, as it appears to the peasantry, the people most concerned. That is the land question.

The "Stab in the Back" Legend

To read the transcript carefully is to see the advantages which the bureaucracy has over committees supposed to supervise it. A little army of experts, intelligence men and skilled propagandists prepare the case for the Administration while the public interest is left to a handful of Senators busy with a multitude of other matters. Propagandistic time-bombs were planted in the government's presentation. An example was General Taylor's remark in his prepared statement that the Communists "have not forgotten that the Viet Minh won more in Paris than in Dien Bien Phu and believe that the Viet Cong may be as fortunate in Washington." This was a dirty dig not only at democratic debate but at the whole idea of civilian control, a new variant of the "stab in the back" legend with which the German military caste excused its failure in the first World War and paved the way for Hitler's overthrow of the German Republic. Democracy was smeared as the cause of Germany's defeat.

This line, which reflects Johnson's anger with his critics, holds great danger for the future. It was the cry of the military conspirators who tried to assassinate de Gaulle and overthrow the French Republic after he withdrew from Algeria. It recalls the McCarthy period's No. 1 canard—that we "lost" China because of Communists in the State Department. It ought to be stepped on hard. But only Senator Aiken really grappled with it. He asked General Taylor whether he thought France "would have won the war had it not been for the weakening will in Paris." "I doubt it, Senator," General Taylor admitted, "but I think they could have lasted longer and could have had better terms." But were not the people of France right to see that their sons were being lost in a hopeless and unworthy cause?

Or By A Quiet Majority Either

Sen. SPARKMAN: Do you believe there has been some growth in the stability of the government?

Gen. TAYLOR: Almost anything would be an improvement over what I saw while I was Ambassador. I had to work with five Prime Ministers in the course of my 13 months. Since this present government is now in its 8th month, clearly it has done better in terms of stability than any government since that of President Diem. . . . This is the first government which is solidly backed by the armed forces, and as long as they are behind this government in the present sense it is not going to be overturned by some noisy minority.

—Senate Foreign Relations Comm. hearing Feb. 17.

Gen. Taylor knows better than most men that the Vietnamese war was no simple Communist plot or foreign invasion. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee could have elicited a great deal from him that the State Department tries to hide. But it didn't know enough to ask the right questions. It should have inquired into the report on South Vietnam he made to President Kennedy in 1961, the year we began to escalate our military involvement. The gist of what Taylor had to say was widely reported at the time. "After his tour in October," *Newsweek* said Dec. 18, 1961, "Gen. Taylor decided that drastic reforms were needed. . . the elections next August must be fair, and all non-Communist political prisoners should be released." Sorenson in his book on Kennedy says Taylor reported "that Diem's own lack of popularity in the countryside was handicapping anti-guerrilla efforts." But the effort to impose social and economic reform as the price of U.S. aid failed. We have been supporting military dictatorship in South Vietnam ever since while pretending that we were defending freedom.

One of the reasons pressure for economic and social reform failed at that time is because of the visit Lyndon John-

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Johnson Made the Same Mistake With Diem As With Ky

(*Continued from Page One*)

son paid to Saigon in the spring of 1961, six months before Taylor's mission. This is discussed in Robert Shaplen's new book, "The Lost Revolution." Its theme is summarized in its subtitle, "The Story of Twenty Years of Neglected Opportunities in Vietnam and of America's Failure to Foster Democracy There." The spring of 1961 was when Johnson laid the flattery on with a shovel, calling Diem the Churchill of Asia. "The effect of Johnson's visit" and the promises of support he gave Diem, Shaplen writes, "was to stiffen the resistance of the Vietnamese" to the reforms the U.S. had long been urging upon them. "After Johnson left," Shaplen says, "the Vietnamese would no longer even discuss these matters." Shaplen writes from long experience in the Far East, principally for *The New Yorker*. "For those of us who had been in China in 1946," he comments on the Johnson visit, "and followed the efforts of the Americans to get Chiang Kai-shek to adopt certain reforms, the comparison was marked. Every time we had thought we were getting somewhere with Chiang . . . we did certain things (such as selling China huge amounts of surplus war property at a crucial moment) that enabled the more reactionary elements around Chiang to convince him that he didn't have to execute any of the reforms the Americans desired because we had made clear our determination to go on helping him in the war against the Communists anyway." The Ky crowd may feel as cynically secure after the similar razzle-dazzle treatment Johnson gave them in Honolulu.

Humphrey's Strident Nonsense

The State Department has widely sold the line in Congress that we ought to "forget about history" and consider what to do now. But to forget about history is to accept the State Department's version and to accept its version is to make negotiations impossible. For what our government has done is very simple. It began by recognizing the popular discontent which brought on the rebellion. But when it could not get reform to end the discontent, it began to pretend that the discontent did not exist, that this was just another form of aggression run from Hanoi. But if this *is* merely aggression from Hanoi, why should aggression be rewarded? What is there to negotiate but withdrawal of "Hanoi's troops"? And if this is aggression from Hanoi, then the National Liberation Front and the Viet Cong are its tools in aggression. How can one reward them by a place in the future government of South Vietnam? What honorable end but their unconditional surrender? This is the dead end into which the government's falsifications have led it. Until the origins of the war are re-examined, as they should be re-examined in full public hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we cannot find our way to a peaceful settlement and we shall have such strident nonsense as Vice President Humphrey's talk about "putting a fox in a chicken coop . . . an arsonist in a fire department" in reply to Senator Robert F. Kennedy's initiative on the war.

The difference between Senator Kennedy and the Administration is not a mere difference on timing or strategy—on

(*Continued on Page Five*)

A Somewhat Academic Question

Sen. LONG: General, I don't have the good fortune to have a son. I have two daughters of whom I am very proud. But if I had a son and he died in Vietnam, would you feel that boy died in vain?

Gen. TAYLOR: No, sir.

—Senate Foreign Relations Comm. hearing Feb. 17.

The Wall St. Journal Wonders Whether LBJ Knows What He's Doing

With all due respect for the Administration's military problems, we imagine a lot of people around the world must find its diplomatic country-hopping an unedifying spectacle. . . . It suggests the substitution of frantic action for calm thought about Vietnam.

The Asian tour Vice President Humphrey is presently taking may have some public relations purpose, but it was so hastily contrived in such an atmosphere of confusion that it is hard to believe it will advance either the war effort or the cause of peace. The same goes for the spur-of-the-moment Honolulu conference and the scurrying about of the envoys earlier this year.

The U.S. performance in the UN Security Council must also appear an oddity to many eyes. After long ignoring the Council as a forum on Vietnam, the Administration suddenly took the issue to it, and just as suddenly seems to have lost interest in seriously pressing for action there.

The whole thing adds up to an impression of impulsiveness and amateurishness in international relations. While the activity may be telling the world we want peace, it could be announcing as well that we don't know quite what we're doing to Vietnam, in view of the evident eagerness to get out of it by almost any avenue.

Where, in all the thrashing about, is the opportunity for the deep reflection the war urgently demands? It might be argued that the length of America's involvement in Vietnam has provided ample time for every conceivable analysis of strategies, objectives and probabilities. If so, there is little evidence the time has been effectively employed. . . .

This background makes the prospect of a major new expansion an especially disquieting one. Whether or not you agree with retired General Gavin and former Ambassador Kennan, they have a point in contending that the U.S. should hold where it is until it can decide what it wants to do. Some disadvantages of expansion have been well rehearsed by now—the mounting risk of war with Red China, the diminishing ability to handle troubles that may erupt elsewhere. In addition, it seems to us there are disadvantages pertaining to Vietnam alone.

Since the Communists have thus far matched or overmatched each American force build-up, they are presumably capable of continuing to do so. In that event, it becomes more difficult than ever to see how this war can be won, either in the sense of clear-cut victory or in the limited sense of causing the Communists to cease fire and come to the conference table.

Moreover, if the war within Vietnam gets bigger and bigger and goes on and on, the likelihood grows that there may not be any Vietnam left worth anyone's having. The U.S. is fighting in part to save South Vietnam, but there is a limit to the destruction of the people and property that can be tolerated before something gives; the government collapses or the people refuse to take it any longer. . . .

—Wall St. Journal editorial, Feb. 15.

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Text: Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's Historic February 17th Statement . . .

This week has been another chapter in a great tradition. For the Senate chamber still echoes to the distant ringing of the great issues of our past. War and westward growth, civil strife and the rights of man have been argued on its floor; and from those debates have emerged the shaping events and judgments of American history.

The greater the issue, the larger the stakes, the more passionately debate has raged, in the Senate and across the land. Abraham Lincoln was reviled for opposing the war of 1848. The citizens of his own state called Daniel Webster traitor for proposing a compromise to avoid civil war. Those who saw the storm, and tried desperately to prepare the nation for World War II, were cursed as warmongers, enemies of mankind, subverters of democracy —and worse.

The Risks of Freedom

Yet despite the condemnations and the violent recriminations, there have always been within the Senate enough men of courage and conviction to triumph in the end over those who would stifle free discussion and action. There are hazards in debating American policy in the face of a stern and dangerous enemy. But that hazard is the essence of democracy . . .

"The best test of truth is the power of thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market place," said Justice Holmes. "That at any rate is the theory of our Constitution. It is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year, if not every day, we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based on imperfect knowledge. While that experiment is part of our system, I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fought with depth."

Our Constitution imposes on the Senate the most heavy and grave independent responsibilities. We ourselves owe to the people of 50 States the burden of independent thought and action. Our whole system of government rests on a complex structure of independence and cooperation among its branches; a structure which requires that we make our own judgments about events, giving due weight to the reason and responsibility of others.

Shall we then debate with force and passion the issues of labor relations and housing and trade—while the great issues of peace and war are allowed to pass in silence? Shall we discuss the standard of living of our constituents—while policies which affect their very existence go undiscussed? To do so would be the gravest departure from our duties as representatives of the people of the American states.

Full and informing debate rests upon moderation and mutual indulgence. Men must seek acceptance of their views through reason, and not through intimidation; through argument, and not through accusation. We are all patriots here. We are all defenders of freedom. We are all Americans. To attack the motives of those who express concern about our present course—to challenge their very right to speak freely—is to strike at the foundations of the democratic process which our fellow citizens, even today, are dying in order to protect . . .

The discussions which have been taking place in recent days are therefore worthwhile and important. But we must do all we can to make certain that the exchange of views accomplishes the most for our country—moving our policy toward the goals we all want to achieve. All of us are concerned, as the American people are concerned, about the progress of the struggle in Vietnam.

There are several aspects to this concern.

We are concerned at the casualties, the death and suffering, of our young men in South Vietnam.

We are concerned over the effect of some of our military actions on the people of South Vietnam—whether more cannot be done to lessen the death and destruction of the innocent that comes with war. For a military victory at the cost of a completely destroyed South Vietnam would be a defeat for our larger purposes.

We are concerned whether the people of South Vietnam are being offered something positive to live and fight for—something beyond negative anti-communism. The President's recent initiatives are to be applauded and welcomed; but it is now incumbent on the government of South Vietnam to make good at last on promises which the people of that unhappy country have heard for many years.

Relations With China

We are concerned over our relationship with Communist China—not just concern to avoid a deadly war, but also concern lest the Viet Nam struggle make any reasonable accommodation with China impossible in the future. The events of the coming decade will determine whether our relations with mainland China will change for the better or for the worse. But they will change and we can influence that change; and the direction of change must receive the earnest attention of the Senate.

And we are concerned about the effect of the war on our domestic efforts to conquer ignorance and disease and unemployment—the problems of the cities—problems which, warned the McCone Commission, could split our society irretrievably. And this concern is heightened by the way in which the war perpetuates discrimination—for the poor and the less fortunate serve in Viet Nam out of all proportion to their numbers in the United States as a whole.

But the central question before us now—the area of greatest present concern for the Senate, and what we must discuss at all levels of government—is our political strategy in the war in Vietnam; not simply *how* to move, but in what direction we *wish* to move.

At the outset, it must be realized that negotiations are not an ultimate goal. Negotiations or discussions are only a means by which ultimate goals may be reached. Our arrival at the bargaining table will not make the struggle disappear. Even if we arrive at the bargaining table, the real question is what goals we will seek there . . .

The Secretary of State and others have stated objectives in general terms. They are the independence of South Vietnam—or, at least, its independent right to determine its own future. They are to halt the aggression from the North and to prove to China that a policy of subversion in other lands will not work. These are worthy objectives. All are important. The question remains, however, under what realistic terms and conditions they can be advanced in Vietnam.

There are three routes before us: military victory, a peaceful settlement, or withdrawal.

The last is impossible for this country. For the United States to withdraw now, as I said last May, would be a repudiation of commitments undertaken and confirmed by three administrations. It would flatly betray those in Vietnam whom we have encouraged by our support to resist the forces of Hanoi and the Viet Cong. Unilateral withdrawal would injure, perhaps irreparably, the principle of collective security, and undermine the independence of small nations everywhere in the world. And it would offer no hope for a reasonable accommodation with China in the future. There are reasonable and responsible steps which we can take to raise the possibility of improved relations with China in the future. But unilateral withdrawal would only reward aggression and could offer China no inducement to reach accommodation in a peaceful world.

I now turn to the open avenues—military victory or a peaceful settlement.

Military victory requires that we crush both our adversary's strength and his will to continue the battle; that the forces from the north be compelled to withdraw beyond the border; that much of Vietnam be destroyed and its people killed; that we continue to occupy South Vietnam as long as our presence is required to insure that hostilities, including insurgency, will not be resumed. And this will be a very long time indeed.

Uncertain Goal

I cannot say with certainty that such an outcome is beyond our reach. We do know, however, that it would mean rapidly increasing commitments of American forces. It would mean a growing risk of widening war—with North Vietnam, with China, even with the Soviet Union. It would lead, indeed already has led thoughtless people to advocate the use of nuclear weapons. And it would involve all these things—commitment, risk, and spreading destruction—in pursuit of a goal which is at best uncertain, and at worst unattainable.

Despite all these dangers, we may yet come to this course. The intransigeance of our adversaries may leave us no alternative. There should be no misunderstanding or miscalculation of this point in either Hanoi or Peking. The American people possess the bravery and the will to follow such a course if others force it upon us. I also believe, however, that given the opportunity by our adversaries, we possess the wisdom, and skill to avoid such a grim necessity.

And President Johnson has made clear, on behalf of the United States, in every forum of the world, that this country seeks the other

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. . . Proposing A Place for the NLF in A Future Government

road: the road to negotiated settlement.

In this pursuit we have asked for unconditional discussions. This means simply that we will neither demand nor yield specific formal commitments before bargaining begins. In fact, both sides must come to any discussion with at least one basic condition; one irreducible demand; one point they will not yield. For the United States it must be that we will not turn South Vietnam over to the North. For North Vietnam it must be that they will not accept a settlement which leaves in the south a hostile government, dedicated to the final physical destruction of all Communist elements, refusing any economic cooperation with the North, dependent upon the continued presence of American military power.

The Minimum Terms

These conditions, these minimum terms, can be breached only at sword's point; only by driving the adversary's forces from the field. For either side to yield its minimum conditions would be in fact to accept to defeat. If we intend to deny these minimum conditions to our adversaries, then we must defeat them completely. If this is what we intend, we should understand it clearly—and undertake it with resolution.

But if negotiation is our aim, as we have so clearly said it is, we must seek a middle ground. *A negotiated settlement means that each side must concede matters that are important in order to preserve positions that are essential.*

It may be that negotiation is not possible in this war because our political aims are irreconcilable; because one side, or both sides, are not willing to accept anything less than the fruits of victory . . .

I believe there is a middle way, that an end to the fighting and a peaceful settlement can be achieved. It must be said, before all else, that the middle way—the way of negotiation—involves risks. An adversary who lives may perhaps fight another day. And a government which is not continuously sheltered by American military power may be again attacked or subverted or overthrown.

These risks, I believe, we are courageous enough to undertake. They are risks, in fact, which we do take every day in a hundred countries in every corner of every continent. There are dozens of countries which might be the target of Communist aggression or subversion. If we were unwilling to take any risk that they might be subverted or conquered by the Communists, we might simply have occupied all of them. But clearly, we would rather live with such risks than attempt to occupy these nations. We take these risks because we believe men and nations will not willingly choose to submit to other men from other lands.

If we are wrong in this basic faith, then Vietnam will be but a flicker in the conflagration which is to come. But in Indonesia, in Algeria, and in the Central African Republic the Chinese have suffered enormous defeats —not because we are stronger or more skilled than they—not because we defeated them. They were defeated because the people of these lands preferred to run their affairs in their own way—and our faith was justified. This basic faith may not be borne out on every occasion in every land. But in the past when the question has been clearly presented, men have chosen independence and fredom.

With this basic faith in the aspirations of man, what are the elements of a settlement in Vietnam?

Whatever the exact status of the National Liberation Front—puppet or partly independent —any negotiated settlement must accept the fact that there are discontented elements in South Viet Nam, Communist and non-Communist, who desire to change the existing political and economic system of the country. There are three things you can do with such groups: kill or repress them, turn the country over to them, or admit them to a share of power and responsibility. The first two are now possible only through force of arms.

The last—to admit them to a share of power and responsibility—is at the heart of the hope for a negotiated settlement. It is not the easy way or the sure way; nor can the manner or the degree of participation now be described with any precision. It may come about through a single conference or many meetings, or by a slow undramatic process of gradual accommodation. It will require enormous skill and political wisdom to find the point at which participation does not bring domination or internal conquests. It will take statesmanship willing to exploit the very real differences of ambition and intention and interest between Hanoi and Peking and the Soviet Union. *It may mean a compromise government fully acceptable to neither side.* It certainly means that we must take considerable risks in the expectation that social and economic success will weaken the appeal of Communism—and that sharing the burden and the satisfaction of helping to guide a nation will attract hostile elements toward a solution which will preserve both the independence of their country and their new found share of power. And we must be willing to face the uncertainties of election, and the possibility of an eventual vote on reunification. We must be prepared to think about what kind of a relationship such a reunified country would have to the United States, to Communist China, to the Soviet Union.

Toward A Settlement

If we are willing to accept these uncertainties and run these risks—and if our adversaries are willing to submit their cause to the same arbitration, the same peaceful choice—then a settlement may be possible; and the other hazards, the hazards of widening conflict and devastation, may be ended.

Of course, such a road toward solution must be protected from sudden and violent upheaval. There must be international guarantees to back up agreement, good faith and mutual self-interest. Foreign forces must be withdrawn, by balanced and varied stages. And we must insist that the political process go forward under the rigorous supervision of a trusted international body.

I would stress that such a settlement would not end our burden or our vigilance in Vietnam. President Johnson has made clear that we are ready to help with economic aid for North Vietnam. Further, if South Vietnam is to remain free to determine its own destiny and to live in harmony with the North, then we must help repair the ravages of twenty years of war. Our reconstruction effort may be nearly as costly, and more demanding of care and intelligence, than is our present military effort. And we must continue to stand guard against any violation of the agreement, which must make clear that the United States would not permit the country or the government to be seized by an outside power.

There will be many other difficulties and problems. I do not pretend to be able to forecast all the details of a final settlement, or the process by which it may be reached. That is the task of statesmanship, in full command of all the channels of communication. But we must have our terms set firmly in our own minds. And we must reveal enough of our intentions to Hanoi to eliminate any reasonable fear that we ask them to talk only to demand their surrender.

Missile Crisis Recalled

And they must be given to understand as well that their present public demands are in fact for us to surrender a vital national interest—but that, as a far larger and more powerful nation learned in October of 1962, surrender of a vital interest of the United States is an objective which cannot be achieved.

I am aware that the United States cannot proclaim in advance the precise terms of an acceptable political settlement. We cannot show all our cards before we get to the bargaining table. Nor can we make all our concessions before receiving concessions from the other side. To so commit ourselves would be to show a weakness which could not serve the cause of justice or the cause of peace.

But we ourselves must look at our own cards. And we must show enough of them to persuade our adversaries that a settlement is in their interests as well as our own.

The Senate could serve no higher function than to discuss—for the benefit of our own people, for our adversaries, and for the people of the world—a framework within which a settlement would be acceptable.

That is why discussion and debate in the Senate are now so important. We stand at the doorway of great decisions and fateful action. To decide in ignorance is to risk disaster. But if we now can clearly define our ends in South Vietnam, if we can at least begin discussing what our future relations with mainland China are to be, if we can adapt our means to those ends, *and, most important, if we can use only that force—and no more—that is needed to accomplish these objectives,* then there is hope that they may be achieved without prohibitive cost to ourselves, to the people of Vietnam, or to the peace of the world. And if this debate can reach such a definition, we will know at least that we have followed the path of reason and realism as far as it now can lead.

And we will have worked to meet our responsibilities to our posterity—to walk the final mile toward peace, not so much for ourselves, as for those who will come later.

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An Approach to Vietnam in the Best Kennedy Tradition

(*Continued from Page Two*)

whether we should in advance of negotiation assure the Viet Cong of some place in a new government. The difference rises from a different view of the war and of the nature of the rebellion; Johnson is making a liberal of Kennedy and a war-monger of Humphrey. We reprint Kennedy's statement in full (except for four minor inconsequential cuts for space reasons) because we believe it represents a political event of the first magnitude. It embodies the best of the Kennedy tradition—the late President began as a hard-liner and ended, as the American University speech showed, by recognizing the need for co-existence. The Robert Kennedy statement begins with an eloquent defense of the right to speak out on the war which is very different from the snide effort of the White House to portray critics as giving aid and comfort to the enemy. On China, Kennedy sees the question not just in terms of avoiding "a deadly war" but "lest the Vietnam struggle make any reasonable accommodation with China impossible in the future." This is fresh and hopeful.

Not Rusk's Holy War View

In seeking a way out, Senator Kennedy is objective enough to recognize that North Vietnam must have minimum assurance that any settlement will not leave the South in possession of "a hostile government, dedicated to final physical destruction of all Communist elements, refusing any cooperation with the North, dependent upon the continued presence of American military power." Most important of all is his readiness to see that "Whatever the exact status of the National Liberation Front—puppet or partly independent—any negotiated settlement must accept the fact that there are discontented elements in South Vietnam, Communist and non-Communist who desire to change the existing political and economic system of the country." This is very different from the Manichean holy war views of Rusk and the Bundy brothers.

The Kennedy statement recalls de Gaulle's magnanimous appeal to the Algerian rebels for "a peace of the brave." It treats our adversaries as human. To suggest that we admit the National Liberation Front "to a share of power and responsibility" took courage. It invited the inflammatory charge that the Senator was suggesting a coalition with the Communists. The history of such coalitions is a painful one, though countless lives were saved when President Kennedy chose the path of coalition rather than intervention in Laos. The mention of coalitions with the Communists at once brings up their history in Eastern Europe where the non-Communist participants were soon made the helpless prisoners of their partners. But there is some merit in the observation that these postwar coalitions did not degenerate into facades until the cold war and the Marshall Plan were used to drive the Communists out of the Popular Fronts which governed France and Italy after the war. There is a legacy of justifiable suspicion on both sides. In Southeast Asia our

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How to Avoid Candor With Agility

Sen. AIKEN: Aren't all our bases surrounded by the Viet Cong?

Gen. TAYLOR: Not in [the way] the word "surrounded" suggests. They have mortar. Six men can have a mortar attack, and get away with it. But 40,000 Marines being in danger of the Viet Cong—I am sure all 40,000 Marines would rise in anger at the suggestion.

Sen. AIKEN: I think you are right. But on the other hand it isn't safe for American soldiers at least to venture out of the bases.

Gen. TAYLOR: Senator, there are bases in Washington that are not safe to walk around at night.

—Senate Foreign Relations Comm. hearing Feb. 17.

Rusk Still Clings to His Mythology About Diem and The Origins of The Revolt

"In agreeing to the 1954 Accords, the regime in Hanoi fully expected that within a relatively short period the South Vietnamese would fall under their control. The South seemed overburdened with troubles. . . . The North moreover had concealed resources in the South. . . . Many Communists fighting with the Viet Minh had been directed by the Lao Dong party in Hanoi to stay in the South, to hide their arms, and to devote their efforts to undermining the South Vietnamese Government. . . . Much to the dismay of the Hanoi regime South Viet-Nam made substantial progress in spite of the extraordinary problems it faced, while North Viet-Nam lagged far behind. As a consequence the Communist leaders in North Viet-Nam were forced to conclude that more active measures were necessary if the subversion of South Viet-Nam were to succeed . . . to take over the people of the other half at the point of a gun and against their will."

—Secretary Rusk to Senate Foreign Relations Feb. 18.

"The popularity of the Diem regime had begun to wane seriously as early as 1957. . . . The attitude toward Diem and his family had begun to change from disinterest or contempt to animosity, chiefly because of the economic and political regimentation. . . . In the countryside, where there was less political awareness of what was going on in Saigon, many peasants had begun to formulate their own opposition: this was also due to increasing regimentation. . . . Repeatedly the Americans suggested that Diem either establish a coalition-type regime or permit a political opposition to function. . . . By 1962 there were some 30,000 prisoners in about 50 jails throughout the country, about two-thirds of whom were classified as political prisoners. Many were captured Vietcong insurgents, but there were also a lot of 'suspects' who had languished in jails for months or even years. Among the prisoners were some 300 non-Communist liberals arrested solely for having expressed anti-Diem views or for being suspected of having spoken out in favor of the abortive 1960 coup."

—Robert Shaplen: The Lost Revolution. The Story of 20 Years of Neglected Opportunities in Vietnam and of America's Failure to Foster Democracy There (Harper, 1965).

"In 1955 every opponent had been denounced [by Diem] as a left-over from the 'feudal rebels' supported by the colonialists. After 1956 every opponent was called a Communist. . . . At first the struggle was conducted by simple means; concentration camps. . . . It was the dictatorship in the South that kindled the fire."

—Jean Lacouture: Vietnam Between Two Truces (Random House, 1966), a leading French authority.

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The Wide Open Door to Peace Johnson Refuses to See

(*Continued from Page Five*)

adversaries will see the Kennedy offer in the light of a different history. They have not forgotten the way the French broke the postwar agreements by which Ho Chi Minh agreed to stay in the French Union in return for the promise of an autonomous and united Vietnam. Nor have they forgotten what happened the last time they were promised free elections. This record of broken pledges and the Administration's equivocal rhetoric explain why, in Senator Kennedy's words, "we must reveal enough of our intentions in Hanoi to eliminate the reasonable fear that we ask them to talk only to demand their surrender."

Widening LBJ's Options

If the Johnson Administration is really ready for something other than the unconditional surrender of the other side, it should be grateful to Senator Kennedy for breaking the ice. Any representative government in South Vietnam will have the National Liberation Front in it. Whatever the extent of its support, it is certainly more representative than the little clique of military men, absentee landlords and war profiteers who are the base of the Saigon government. If the Saigon government had any other support, it wouldn't be so fearful of allowing a free press and free political activity. If honorable negotiations are to be possible, someone must begin to talk of these realities. The Senate ought to embody Kennedy's views in an advisory resolution as a means of widening Johnson's options and making peace more attainable. If Johnson on the other hand is merely talking peace to cover escalation, if he is building up troops and bases for a showdown with China, then the sooner the country is alerted and his leadership challenged the better.

Senator Kennedy harks back to the Cuban missile crisis as a model for action combining firmness and flexibility. We regard the episode more astringently. The missile crisis, which might have brought world disaster if either opponent slipped, is a warning of the perils ahead if international disputes are to be resolved in a lawless world (like a TV-Western saloon) by eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation. But in one way it was a model which can be applied to the Vietnamese war. The ingenuity with which President Kennedy found a basis for mutually satisfactory settlement in an obscure hint Khrushchev may or may not have meant seriously was creative statesmanship. It would take only a very little of this quality to find a way out of the Vietnamese morass. The simplest way would be to open negotiations quietly and directly with the National Liberation Front and Hanoi on the meaning of point three in its Four Points, the only one the Administration claims is unacceptable. This says "the internal affairs of the South Vietnam must be settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves, in accordance with the program of the National Liberation Front without any foreign interference." The program of the Front calls for " a government of national and democratic union" representing "all social classes . . . the various political parties . . . all religions"; the reestablishment of political freedom and expression, and the election of "a new National Assembly through universal suffrage" (text at p. 216 of *The Vietnam Reader*, edited by Raskin and Fall). On its face, this calls for free elections to determine the South's future *independently of the North*. If the Johnson Administration is sincere in talking about free elections—which we doubt—it could prove its sincerity by getting down to brass tacks and discussing with the other side just how Point Three would be implemented. That's a wide open door compared to the murky loophole John F. Kennedy used to get us *and* the Russians out of collision course in the missile crisis.

Any Place They're Ready to Surrender

Sen. AIKEN: Then you . . . intimate that the time to negotiate is after we have defeated them.

Gen. TAYLOR: I wouldn't say defeat . . . but I would say until it is quite sure that their course of action is a losing one. . . .

Sen. AIKEN: Is that consistent with President Johnson's position that he will negotiate with anybody, anywhere, any time. . . .?

Gen. TAYLOR: No, sir, I don't detect that.

—Senate Foreign Relations Comm. hearing Feb. 17.

IFS and Jean Lacouture Will Speak With Sgt. Donald Duncan on The Truth About "Special Forces" at Town Hall, New York City, 7:15 p.m., March 3

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